

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SERVICES

YOUTH REHABILITATION & TREATMENT CENTER  
Kearney, Nebraska

# PARENT HANDBOOK



## Administration

Mr. Timothy O'Dea.....	Facility Administrator
Mr. David Kottich.....	Assistant Facility Administrator
Ms. Rosalie McCurry.....	Administrative Assistant
Mr. Tony Kleidosty.....	Principal
Dr. Lyle Drieling.....	Psychologist
Mr. Tom Smith.....	Youth Counselor Supervisor
Ms. Kim Frink.....	Nurse
Pastor Marvin Valdois.....	Religious Coordinator
Mr. Richard Wetjen.....	Recreation Manager
Ms. Deb Eirich.....	Business Manager
Mr. Ron Cox.....	Psychologist Associate
Mr. Dan Theobald.....	Training Coordinator
Ms. Mary Wright.....	Food Service Manager
Officer of the Day.....	Youth Security Supervisor
Mr. Steve Reeves.....	Facility Maintenance Supervisor

(Revised January 2006)

## **Directions**

The YRTC-K campus is located on the west edge of Kearney, at the top of the hill, north of the intersection of Highway 30 and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## **Mailing Address**

Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center  
2802 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Kearney, Nebraska 68845

## **Numbers**

Phone	Fax
(308)865-5313	(308)865-5323

**Web Site:**      [www.hhs.state.ne.us/jus/yrtc/yrtckindex.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/jus/yrtc/yrtckindex.htm)

## **History of YRTC-Kearney**

The Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center-Kearney (YRTC-K) was established by the Nebraska State Legislature in 1879 and began receiving young people, both male and female, in July 1881. In 1892, the then Nebraska State Reform School for Juvenile Offenders, became a male-only youth facility with the establishment of the female youth facility in Geneva, Nebraska. The original 320-acre Kearney campus was developed on land donated to the State of Nebraska by the City of Kearney. The State of Nebraska returned nearly 200 acres to the City of Kearney for the development of a city-operated golf course in 1991. On January 1, 1994, the institutional name was changed for the fifth time to the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center by the Nebraska Unicameral. YRTC-K also was placed legislatively under the Office of Juvenile Services within the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services. On January 1, 1997, the Unicameral merged the Office of Juvenile Services with four other State agencies to form the Health and Human Services System. HHSS is the parent agency under which YRTC-K is one of nine 24 hour care facilities including three Regional centers, three Veterans Homes, one Development Center, and the two YRTC's. YRTC-K is within the HHSS Protection and Safety Division.

Dear Parents/Guardians of YRTC-Kearney youth,

The Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center-Kearney's mission is to help youth live better lives through effective services affording youth the opportunity to become law-abiding and productive citizens. The Nebraska Juvenile Courts understand this mission and decided that your son should be given that opportunity and committed him to the custody of the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center. The emphasis of your son's YRTC-Kearney program stay is for him to return to his home and community and enter adult life.

YRTC-Kearney staff are dependent upon the youth's family to support him and his efforts. Positive communication with his parents/guardians is a must for all youth. Celebrating his gain in self-worth and knowledge is vital to his success. The parents/guardian's preparation for his return to them is important to his program success as well. The youth's Juvenile Service Officer is his and his parents/guardian's link to this preparation through implementation of family centered practice procedures. The youth's Juvenile Service Officer will visit him monthly at YRTC-Kearney and receive monthly youth progress reports along with the parents/guardians.

We urge the youth's parents/guardians to work cooperatively with YRTC-K staff in supporting the youth and his needs. Together, we can turn these opportunities and successes into a productive life for the youth.

Do not hesitate to ask questions of YRTC-Kearney staff. Without correct information and knowledge no one can succeed in life. Thank you for working with us to assist your son.

Sincerely,

Mr. Tim O'Dea  
YRTC-Kearney Administrator



## Orientation

Upon arrival, each youth is assigned to the campus orientation program in Dickson Living Unit for up to two weeks. Orientation is designed to give the youth time to adjust and begin to understand the YRTC-K program and expectations. He will be given a YRTC-K Youth Manual which explains the YRTC-K program, expectations, procedures and rules. YRTC-K staff will assess the youth's needs during the first two weeks to offer the best treatment possible.

## Living Units

At the conclusion of your son's orientation, 10 working days after he enters YRTC-K, he will be moved into a permanent living unit. With the exception of the Dickson Living Unit, all YRTC-K living units consist of three youth treatment groups. The living unit staff and the assigned youth group will help to teach your son about the living unit life. Each youth group has an assigned Youth Counselor who is your contact person. Youth Counselors' work shift is 12:30 to 8:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Your son's treatment group has 9 youth of similar age, size and maturity. This group does all activities together. Treatment group meetings are Monday through Friday, 90 minutes daily, starting at either 4:00 or 6:30 PM.

Your son's group will also be assigned to living unit details, within and outside the unit. Youth groups will also be assigned to service projects on and off the YRTC-K campus.

To ensure the safety and security of your son, he will be instructed in emergency procedures in the event of a fire or tornado and practice these procedures monthly.

Each living unit is managed by the staff and treatment team. The unit treatment team meets weekly to discuss the youth's progress, plan unit activities, implement treatment plans and set on and off campus youth visitation lists. Please call prior to your campus visit if you have questions about visitation.



## DAILY SCHEDULE FOR YOUTH

6:00 am	Wake up
6:00-6:30 am	Personal Hygiene and Clean Unit
6:30-7:30 am	Breakfast
7:30-8:30 am	Clean Unit
8:30-11:30 am	School Classes
11:30-12:30 pm	Lunch
12:45-3:45 pm	School Classes
4:00-8:00 pm	Youth Group Meetings and Recreation
5:30-6:30 pm	Dinner
8:00-9:00 pm	Recreation, homework, etc.
9:00 pm	Clean Unit, prepare for bed
9:30 pm	To bed and sleep

## The YRTC-K Youth Treatment Program

The YRTC-Kearney mission is to help youth live better lives through effective services affording them the opportunity to become law-abiding and productive citizens. This is accomplished through the use of an all-encompassing youth treatment program. Program offerings include: anger management; drug and alcohol use; individual counseling; education; psychiatric/psychological counseling; chemical dependency treatment; trauma counseling; problem resolution; and transitioning into the community program.

## INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT PLAN

A personalized and comprehensive individual treatment plan, (ITP), for your son, will be developed to help guide him during his YRTC-K program stay. The ITP goals are designed to help him prepare for his return home.

The ITP is developed within 14 calendar days of his classification to YRTC-K youth group. The Youth Counselor I is responsible for the development, monitoring, and procedural completion of your son's ITP. The ITP will be given to the YRTC-K Administrator for review and signature

prior to review and signoff by the Youth Counselor I, your son, and the Juvenile Service Officer. Your son has a copy of his ITP to guide him during his program stay. Your son's Juvenile Service Officer will discuss his ITP with you and give you a copy.

Included in the ITP will be: Your son's name, DOB, committing court, Juvenile Service Officer, Youth Counselor I, treatment group, parent/guardian name, address, phone, date received at YRTC-K and committing reason, problems to be worked on at YRTC-K, youth strengths, resources available at YRTC-K, outside of the YRTC-K to implement plan, i.e. Medicaid, child support, contact persons, probable parole placement, estimated length of stay to complete ITP.

Your son's Education Plan becomes a part of the ITP and is authored by your son's Basic Education teacher. The Education Plan includes what classes and services he will have the opportunity to take part in at YRTC-K

## MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORTS

The Youth Counselor I, in conjunction with the treatment team, will complete a monthly narrative report to your son's committing judge. This report, in letter form, is written in non-treatment language.

Specific comments could include: The Youth Counselor I's observations for the past month of his progress on the ITP objectives including group meetings attended and problems solved. Treatment team comments on progress, problems, personal appearance, attitude, effort on work details, school progress, focal points for your son for the next month, special areas of note for the past month.

This letter will be read to your son per his request during his youth treatment group meeting. Oral comments from him and his group are noted. Your son will sign off after hearing his letter each month from the Youth Counselor I.

This letter is sent to the committing judge with copies to the YRTC-K Administrator, the youth's Juvenile Service Officer, the living unit treatment team and you. If you have any questions about the letter and your son's progress, please contact your son's YRTC-K Youth Counselor.

## Education

West Kearney High School (WKHS) is accredited by the Nebraska State Department of Education and North Central Association. The school year is composed of six (6), eight (8) week sessions. The WKHS program is designed for students with varied academic abilities and backgrounds. Each student has an Individual Education Plan or an Education Plan designed to meet his academic and pre-vocational needs. Your son's grade placement and curriculum assignments are made after reviewing his academic records and transcripts, an on-site psychological appraisal, and on-site academic and vocational assessment. The school operates year-round with classes in session 8:30-3:45pm Monday through Friday, with the exception of holidays. Your son is expected to complete his assignments to either earn credits toward his high school diploma or prepare him to earn his General Education Development Certificate (GED). The credits he earns at YRTC-K can be transferred to his home school district and applied toward a high school diploma.





## Medical

Access to health care is explained to all youth in orientation and in his YRTC-K youth manual. An Intake Screening form is used by our orientation unit staff at the time of commitment. Information from this form alerts staff to any immediate problems. A nurse completes a comprehensive nursing assessment with each youth within seven days of arrival. A physician physical is done for each youth within fourteen days unless records show one was done within 90 days. The contracted physician comes one day per week and if treatment is needed between physician visits, arrangements are made and the youth is transported to his or her office. A daily youth sick call is conducted. It is up to your son to tell us if he feels sick or has a medical concern or question. Emergency and inpatient medical services are provided at Kearney's Good Samaritan Hospital.

The contracted part-time dentist or hygienist also sees each new youth within seven to fourteen days and as needed. Outside referrals are made as needed. YRTC-K does not perform orthodontal procedures.





## Recreation/Leisure

Recreation and leisure activities are an important part of the YRTC-K program. Your son will have access to a variety of constructive leisure time activities. Recreation/leisure time activities will be developed, information disseminated and posted for youth and staff. Recreation programs shall be designed to allow each youth to participate in activities beneficial to his personal development while at YRTC-K. Activities may include, but are not limited to, the use of the gym, swimming pool, playground, arts & crafts, and special events. A major portion of the YRTC-K youth sports program are intramural sports. These seasonal sports include softball, flag football, volleyball, basketball, soccer and beach volleyball. Getting and staying fit is part of a healthy lifestyle and YRTC-K provides opportunities for youth to get and stay fit.



## Food Service

YRTC-K provides three (3) balanced meals a day. Menus are planned to meet or exceed the nutritional standards as recommended by dietary guidelines and are approved by a Registered Dietician. Regular dining facility inspections are made by the State Department of Health.

Special diets will be provided for your son when prescribed by YRTC-K medical staff members. Religious diets will also be provided on the recommendation of the YRTC-K Chaplain and with the approval of the Administrator.

## Spiritual Program

Religious/spiritual programming is one part of the overall YRTC-K program. Religious programming is available to your son, should he decide to participate. A part time Protestant Chaplain and a part time Catholic Priest are employed by YRTC-K. The YRTC's religious program consists of regularly scheduled chapel services, Bible study classes, individual counseling, and a Prison Fellowship program.

Chapel services are held every Sunday morning at 8AM in the All Faiths Chapel. If you are visiting your son on Sunday, you may attend Chapel services with him without being counted as part of your visitation hours. Please sign in with the front office Receptionist prior to chapel attendance.



## Volunteer Program

The YRTC-K encourages citizen involvement and volunteer programs in all YRTC-K program areas. The goal of citizen and volunteer programs is to generate a variety of services and experiences for youth. The citizen involvement and volunteer program is directed by the YRTC-K Recreation Manager. Citizen volunteers participate with youth in Bible studies and other campus and off campus activities.

## Community Service/Activities

The primary goal of the YRTC-K youth community service/activities program is to enable youth to return volunteer service as part of restorative justice concept. Our youth and staff have a long running commitment of service to the Kearney area community. All YRTC-K youth are led by staff in service projects throughout the year. University of Nebraska at Kearney, Kearney Volunteer Fire Department, City of Kearney, and the Grand Island Veteran's Home are just a few examples of collaboration and long standing partnerships for youth service and activities.



## Telephone

In order to maintain contact with his family, your son will be allowed to make telephone calls through the use of the YRTC-K Automated Youth Calling System.

Upon your son's arrival at YRTC-K, he will be allowed a free phone call to his parents or guardian. This call is to let you know that he is at YRTC-K and he is safe.

Your son will be allowed two collect calls a month to his parents or guardian.

Collect calls are scheduled:

1. The day he leaves orientation and enters a youth group in the open living unit.
2. Every 15 days following his group classification (until on schedule with progress letters).
3. The day of his monthly progress letter.
4. Fifteen (15) days following each monthly progress letter.
5. The day he earns release.

All telephone calls are electronically recorded and may be monitored by authorized YRTC-K staff. Use of the Automated Youth Calling System by your son and acceptance of the call by you is consent to record and monitor the conversation by authorized YRTC-K staff.

When your son calls you using the Automated Youth Calling System, you will receive the following automated message:

*"You have a collect call from (Youth's first and last name) at the Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Center-Kearney in Nebraska. If you wish to accept this call, press (number stated). If you do not wish to accept this call, press (number stated). If you wish to block all future calls from this facility, press (number stated). All calls are recorded and may be monitored. Do not use custom calling features such as call forward, 3-way calling, or conference calling which may result in termination of this call."*

If you accidentally push the wrong number and block all calls, you must write a letter to the YRTC-K Facility Administrator and notify him that you accidentally blocked these calls and would like the block removed. He in turn will notify the telephone company who will then remove the block. We will let you know when the block has been removed.

Your son may not call you using this system if there is a collect call block on your phone. If there is a block on long distance collect calls and you do wish to receive collect calls from your child, you must contact your phone company and request that the block be removed. When it has been removed, you may notify the Automated Youth Calling System by calling 1-800-844-6591 and notify them that the block has been removed.

Your son is not allowed to receive phone calls at any time. If an emergency should arise, please call the YRTC-K Youth Security Supervisor for an injury, death, or serious illness within the immediate family. In these cases, arrangements will be made, when possible, for the youth to

visit members of the immediate family or attend the funeral. Remember, however, this applies to immediate relatives only, (Immediate relatives are defined as mother, father, siblings, or grandparents.)

## Mail

Your son may write letters to whomever he chooses, however staff has the right to determine if this correspondence is harmful to his positive development. The YRTC-K will give him stamps for two letters a week. One of these stamps must be used to write his parent(s) or guardian(s). Also, YRTC-K will provide stamps for any legal correspondence he may have. He can write his lawyer or Guardian Ad Litem when he needs to. If you feel letters he is receiving are having a negative influence on him, you have the right to request that he stop writing that person.

If your son wishes to correspond with his immediate family in a correctional facility the YRTC-K Administrator will write the Administrator of the facility. If both Administrators agree, the YRTC-K Administrator will follow up with Inter-institutional Mailing Approval prior to any mailing. Your son will need to request this action by speaking with his YRTC-K Youth Counselor.

Your son's mail may not be given to him if it is determined such letters will harm his safety, security, or rehabilitation process. He will be informed as to the reason for not receiving such letters.

If his mail is not given to him, a statement will be sent to the sender stating the reason for denial. If the sender wishes to challenge the decision, the Department Grievances Procedure must be used.

Your son MAY NOT SEAL his letters. He should be aware that all of his letters may be read by YRTC-K staff if there is just cause.

He may seal letters to his lawyer or state officials. Your son's mail must be opened by a staff member in your son's presence.

He may not receive any food items (cookies, candy, etc.) by mail.

Example of proper YRTC-K mail:

Your Return Address	
-----	Stamp
-----	
Your Son's Name Here	
2802 30 <sup>th</sup> Ave.	
Kearney NE	
68845	



## **Clothing, Personal Items & Money**

YRTC-K youth are not allowed to wear personal clothing. Adequate clothing will be provided by YRTC-K. Any personal clothing brought onto the YRTC-K facility will be sent to youth's home at his expense. YRTC-K has a central laundry warehouse that provides all youth clothing and linens.

One wristwatch and one religious cross or medallion on a single chain are the only jewelry allowed. Radios, tape and CD players are allowed, but must have headphones and be under \$100 in retail value. Equipment that will record is not allowed. Recorded over tapes and any tapes or CD's with explicit lyrics are not allowed. Youth may be requested to send any unacceptable clothing or property home by U.S. Mail at their expense. **EACH YOUTH ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL PERSONAL PROPERTY.** YRTC-K will not assume liability for a youth's personal property and strongly recommends ALL expensive or sentimental personal items remain at home. There is no lending or borrowing of personal property among youth.

The YRTC-K Business Office will establish an account for each youth. All funds received for a youth will be placed in the youth's account and a receipt is issued to the depositor and the youth. A youth's monthly YRTC-K allowance of \$15 will be deposited in his account at the YRTC-K Business Office. The allowance is for purchase of personal hygiene items at the YRTC-K canteen. Youth are not allowed to carry cash. Institutional checks may be written by the youth for canteen purchases and other special purchases. You may leave money for the youth with the receptionist during a visit. Cash or money orders may be sent in letters but sending cash by mail is not recommended. No personal checks will be accepted. After leaving YRTC-K it takes about 6 weeks to clear his account.

## **Visits**

Visits are an important part of your son's YRTC-K program and are encouraged throughout his stay. Visits are intended to allow your son and his family to communicate effectively, discuss his YRTC-K progress, and discuss his plans when he is released from YRTC-K. If you have questions after reading the following policy, be sure to ask the YRTC-K Receptionist.

1. Your son may receive visits **ONLY** from immediate family members, (parents, siblings, and grandparents) and legal guardians. Siblings under the age of 21 must be accompanied by parents, grandparents, or legal guardian to be allowed to visit. Siblings age 21 or older are eligible to visit alone with YRTC-K approval. Other adults with a sincere interest in your son such as a minister or teacher may request approval for a special visit. A special visit is usually 30 minutes in duration. These visits are not counted as his once a week visit and will not interfere with family visits.
2. Daily visiting hours begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. Visits are limited to one visitation period of four hours every seven days. This period runs from 8:00 a.m. Sunday through 3:30 p.m. Saturday. When your son has not had a visit for 30 days, he is entitled to an all day visit. Parents, grandparents, guardians must request an all day visit from YRTC-K Receptionist upon their arrival.
3. To begin each visit, you must register with the Receptionist. The Receptionist will explain two forms which are required to be completed prior to the visit beginning. If you remain on the YRTC-K campus, you may visit in the area adjacent to the Receptionist's office, in

the Canteen, or in the area east of the school where picnic benches are provided. If these areas become too crowded, notify the Receptionist and other arrangements can be made. **VISITING IN CARS OR IN THE PARKING LOT IS NOT ALLOWED.** Siblings should remain under the supervision of parents, grandparents or guardians at all times. Your son is not allowed to drive, smoke, or use alcohol or drugs while on visits.

4. Off-campus visits are determined weekly during the living unit weekly team meeting. If your son is eligible to leave the campus during a visit he must be under the supervision of parents, grandparents, or guardians at all times. Siblings 21 years and older are not eligible to supervise visits off campus without YRTC-K approval. Off campus visits are restricted to the limits of Buffalo County. The only exceptions are a visit to Pioneer Village in Minden or Fort Kearny State Park. If you plan to visit either place, you must inform the Receptionist prior to leaving campus. **ONCE YOUR SON LEAVES THE YRTC-K CAMPUS ON A VISIT, HE IS TO REMAIN OFF THE CAMPUS DURING THE VISIT. HIS VISIT ENDS WHEN HE RETURNS TO CAMPUS. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO CHECK YOUR SON IN WITH THE RECEPTIONIST AT THE END OF THE VISIT.** If you would like to leave gifts, check them in with the Receptionist at the end of the visit. Expensive items are discouraged. If money is left for the youth, the Receptionist will issue a receipt to the person who leaves the money, no personal checks will be accepted. No food items will be taken back to the living unit.
5. If your son is assigned to Dickson Security Unit due to disciplinary action, only his parents will be allowed to visit. The visit is limited to one-two (2) hour period per week from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Central Standard Time in the Security Unit. No food or beverages allowed in the Security Unit. Parents are urged to contact the youth's Youth Counselor prior to visiting.
6. We urge you to discuss the following with your son during the visit: How are you doing with schoolwork? What problems are you working to solve? Are you helping yourself and your group members? Have you spoken with your JSO/Juvenile Service Officer lately and what did you talk about for plans upon leaving YRTC-K?
7. If you misrepresent a visitor i.e. identifying a girlfriend as your son's sister, your future visits may be at risk. If you aid your son's escape, you will be unable to visit in the future and may be subject to legal action.
8. Pursuant to NE Statue 28-912.01, Any person who entices or attempts to entice a juvenile away from a facility or program when the juvenile has been legally placed with or committed to the Office of Juvenile Services/YRTC or who knowingly harbors, transports, conceals, or aids in harboring, transporting, or concealing any juvenile who has escaped from the custody of the Office of Juvenile Services/YRTC is guilty of a Class IV Felony.

Follow the rules and have a good visit. If you have questions or need help, make sure you ask the Receptionist, Officer of the Day, or other available YRTC-K staff.



## **NOTICE:**

If you have a concern or question about YRTC-Kearney we urge you to contact the YRTC-K Administration.

You also may express your concerns about YRTC-Kearney to:

Nebraska State Ombudsman  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln NE 68509-4712  
(800)742-7690

**OR**

The Health and Human Services System Advocate may be contacted by calling or writing to the following address/phone number.

HHSS System Advocate  
P.O. Box 95026  
Lincoln NE 68509-5026  
(800)254-4202

